

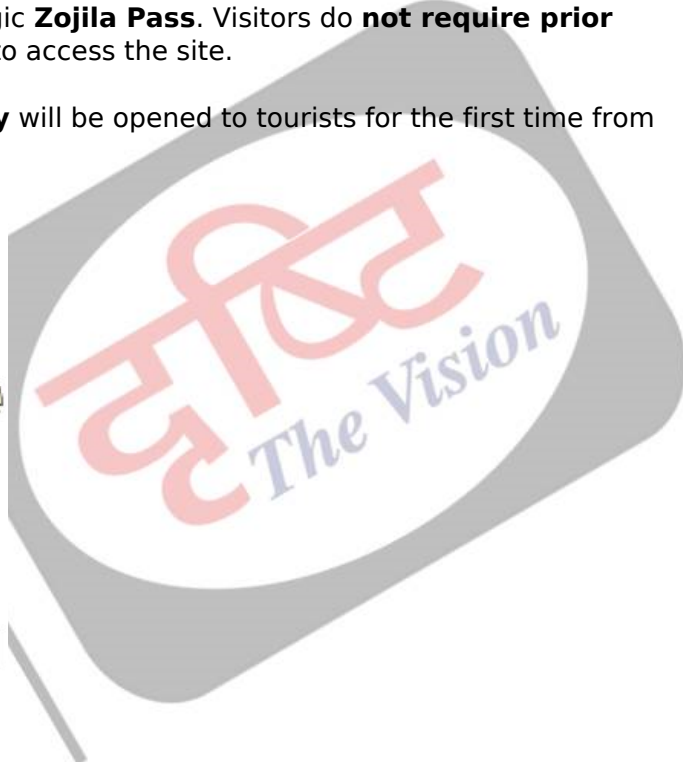


Zojila Pass Now Open for Tourists

Why in News?

The [Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council \(LAHDC\)](#) has opened the [Siachen base camp](#) to tourists, following the early reopening of the strategic **Zojila Pass**. Visitors do **not require prior authorisation** or a **no-objection certificate (NOC)** to access the site.

- LAHDC also announced that the **Galwan Valley** will be opened to tourists for the first time from June 15, 2025.



Key Points

- **Galwan Valley:**
 - The valley will be accessible via **Shyok village**, a key route in the region.
 - The decision marks a historic development as this is the first-ever public access to Galwan Valley, a sensitive military zone.
 - The opening is timed to coincide with the fifth anniversary of the [2020 Galwan Valley clashes](#), underscoring the area's symbolic significance.
- **Zojila Pass:**
 - Zoji La is a **high mountain pass** located in the **Kargil district of Ladakh**.
 - The pass links **Leh and Srinagar** and provides an important link **between Union Territories of Ladakh and Kashmir**.
 - It is vital for the movement of goods and personnel, especially for security forces stationed in Ladakh.
 - Zoji la is known as the **“Mountain Pass of Blizzards”**.

- Zojila pass remains closed during winters due to **heavy snowfall, cutting off Ladakh region from Kashmir.**
- In 2018, the **Zojila tunnel** project was launched. The **tunnel is Asia's longest and strategic bi-directional tunnel**, which will provide all-weather **connectivity between Srinagar, Kargil and Leh.**
- The [Border Roads Organisation \(BRO\)](#) reopened Zojila Pass for traffic.

Galwan Valley

- **Geographic Location:**
 - Galwan Valley lies **between steep mountain ranges** through which the Galwan River flows.
 - The **Galwan River originates in Aksai Chin (under Chinese control)** and flows westward into Ladakh, where it **merges with the Shyok River** on the Indian side of the [Line of Actual Control \(LAC\)](#).
 - The valley serves as a **crucial corridor between western Ladakh and eastern Aksai Chin.**
- **Chinese Control:**
 - Aksai Chin, where the river begins, is administered by China as part of its **Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region.**
- **Proximity to Key Roads:**
 - On the Indian side, the valley is close to the **Darbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road**, a strategic supply route.
 - On the Chinese side, it lies near the G219 highway, a major road connecting Xinjiang and Tibet.

Border Roads Organisation (BRO)

- BRO was **conceived and raised in 1960 by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru** for coordinating the **speedy development of a network of roads in the North and the North Eastern border regions** of the country.
- It works under the **administrative control of the Ministry of Defence.**
- It has diversified into a large spectrum of construction and development works **comprising airfields, building projects, defence works and tunneling** and has endeared itself to the people.
- **Important programmes:**
 - In 2023-24, the BRO completed 125 infrastructure projects, including the construction of the [Sela Tunnel in Arunachal Pradesh](#) on **Balipara-Chardwar-Tawang Road.**
 - The BRO will soon start construction on the 4.10-km long **Shinkun La Tunnel**, which will become the **world's highest tunnel at 15,800 ft** once completed, **bypassing China's Mila Tunnel at 15,590 ft.**

Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC)

- **About:**
 - LAHDC was **established under the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Act, 1995.**
 - The creation of LAHDC introduced **democratic decentralization of the planning process**, enabling grassroots participation in decision-making.
- **Significance:**
 - Given Ladakh's challenging terrain and remote locations, the need for public involvement in planning and development was particularly critical.
 - LAHDC's structure allows for **locally informed policies that address the unique needs of the region.**

